

GUN DOG IN NEW YORK CITY

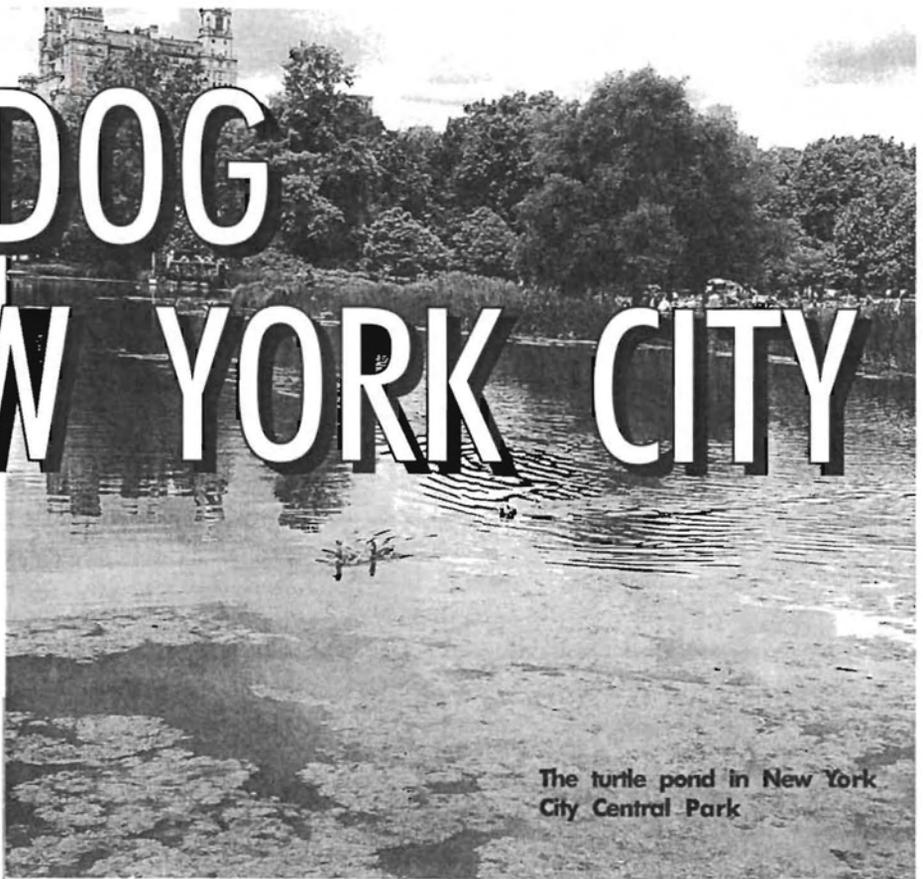
BY KUNI SMITH

MY SUPER, STAMINA AMERICAN cocker Puppie was born in the Pennsylvania Amish country. I brought him to the New York City when he was three months old. The first night I immediately put him in his cage, as everyone had advised me. But he cried like crazy almost waking up the whole block, let alone my immediate neighbors. I panicked, removed him from his cage and held him the rest of the night. From then on, he was in charge! In the days ahead he soon found a ball and would not rest until I played retrieve with him endlessly with only naps and feeding to give me a break.

About a month after he arrived in New York I moved to the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean. It turned out to be the ideal life and a great training environment for this high stamina cocker. With its long sandy beaches to run on and its ocean waves to swim through, he got so strong!

After two years we headed back to New York City and the wilds of Central Parks. His nose had plenty of scents to pick up on. He was often off the leash because I wanted him to have his freedom and I knew he would not hurt any people. Sometimes a park ranger would warn me about the fine, but when they saw how happy he was chasing the squirrels, pigeons and ducks, they just smiled and walked away.

The next summer, an old friend of mine from Japan came to New York on her way to South Dakota to visit her brother. This was not her first trip to New York City as she often came here in her role as chief editor of Japanese "Cosmopolitan" magazine.



The turtle pond in New York City Central Park

She was about to be introduced to a part of Manhattan she had never experienced before.

We decided one day to take Puppie for a walk in the Park and then stop somewhere and have lunch. Puppie was walking in front of us as we approached Turtle Pond, home of some actual turtles. I did not see any ducks in the pond so I thought it would be safe to leave him off his leash. In a flash, he disappeared around a bend and I could see his ripples on the pond. He had spotted some ducks! "That's it," I said to my friend, "we won't be able to go to lunch for an hour!" She looked at me quizzically. "Just watch", I said. Puppie would swim hard after the sitting ducks. Just when he got close, they would fly a short distance away and the chase would start all over again. Sometimes he'd get so close that it looked as if he would actually catch one. It soon turned into a huge show with a crowd of people cheering him on from the shore. Even some Park Maintenance people gave up telling me to get my dog on a leash and joined the "show". People were clapping, cheering and laughing. The funniest scene was when Puppie climbed up a rock in the middle of the pond. All the ducks followed him and sat in the water right behind him. He soon turned around, saw the ducks and

leaped into the water. The chase was on again. The crowd was laughing so hard. One very handsome young man tried to help me catch Puppie when he came near the shore but he slipped and fell into the water, soaking his clothes.

Finally, after about an hour, Puppie decided he had enough of this and out he came to the cheers of the crowd. My friend could not believe how much fun a walk in the Park with Puppie could be. This was better than Broadway! I apologized to the man who fell into the pond. He and his friend then said, "He would make a great hunting dog." "He is a hunting dog", I said. "He even has a Junior Hunter Title." We all had a good laugh. This little hunting dog touched a lot of people that day in the big city!



David Lamar JH "Puppie"